commence on the Russian proposal to jointly develop a fifth generation combat aircraft. The Russian experts had completed the initial work on the proposed project and are required to make a presentation to the Indian side.

(d) No defence related agreement has been signed with Russia during the visit of Prime Minister to Russia November 2001.

Status of advanced light helicopter programme after lifting of US Sanctions

2476. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that the HAL designed ALH programme suffered a set back when the USA and some other countries imposed sanctions on India after the Pokhran nuclear explosion; and

(b) if so, what will be the impact on this programme now that these sanctions have been lifted.

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) During the design and development of Advanced Light Helicopter programme, engine CTS-800-4 H from M/s. LHTEC, U.S.A. was considered for fitment. However, on account of US sanctions, the supply of this engine could not take place. Therefore, efforts were made to locate alternate sources and TM-333-2B2 engine from M/s. TURBOMECA, France was selected with the concurrence of all the user-services concerned. Flight evaluation for certification of the Advanced Light Helicopter was progressed with the French engine and subsequently series production of the helicopter has also been taken up with this engine. Thus, after an initial delay, alternate measures as stated above, were taken in order that the programme proceeds towards completion.

In view of the above, waiver of sanctions does not affect the programme.